



# Montgomery County Council

*From the Offices of Councilmembers Phil Andrews & Blair Ewing*

**For Immediate Release**

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*"Seeing is believing why the ICC is a bad idea..."*

## **COUNCILMEMBERS ANDREWS, EWING TO LEAD SATURDAY HIKE THROUGH FORESTS, WETLANDS THAT WOULD BE DESTROYED BY ICC RIGHT-OF-WAY**

***Ewing lays out 8-point plan for roads, transit***

On the theory that a picture is worth a thousand words, County Councilmembers Phil Andrews and Blair Ewing announced today that they would lead a Saturday hike through miles of forests and wetland that would be destroyed or irreparably damaged by the construction of the controversial \$1.5 billion InterCounty Connector superhighway.

The hike will be preceded by a brief rally at 10 AM this Saturday, April 27 at Lake Needwood Picnic Area # 3, with the main entrance to the park at Avery Road near Muncaster Mill Road in Rockville. The hike along the ICC right-of-way just north of Lake Needwood will begin at 10:30 AM and will be guided by an expert from the Native Plant Society.

The event is co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Sierra Club and other environmental and civic organizations and is open to all, including families.

"Seeing is believing," said Councilmember Andrews. "We invite folks to see for themselves why the InterCounty Connector would be an unmitigated disaster for our County's environment. It would destroy 552 acres of forest. It would impact over 1,000 (more...)"

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acres of forest bird habitat. It would adversely effect our water quality by silt and pollutants dumped into the Northwest Branch, Paint Branch, Little Paint Branch, and Indian Creeks.”

“Is it any wonder then that the federal Environmental Protection Agency has twice rejected the ICC on environmental grounds, under Democratic and Republican presidents?”

“People who say we can mitigate the damage of a superhighway such as this on the environment are not dealing with the real world. When roads cut through mature forests and across streams, however they are designed, they chop now-unbroken tracts into smaller pieces, creating edge effects that are catastrophic for many species of birds, animals, and plants that need ‘elbow room.’ Studies have shown that even a 10 percent impervious surface area in a watershed is the maximum a stream can take before reproducing trout populations die off.”

“Once these natural resources are gone, they are gone forever. If the ICC is built, future generations – who will still be stuck in traffic – will shake their heads at us and wonder why we destroyed so much to gain so little, if anything.”

The Montgomery County Council has long opposed the project, as has the Prince George’s County Council. Governor Parris Glendening decided not to move forward on the ICC, calling it “an environmental disaster.”

“The ICC will offer precious little traffic congestion relief – at enormous cost – and will fuel even more development and sprawl, further worsening traffic,” added Councilmember Blair Ewing.

“The pro-ICC 1997 Draft Environmental Impact study offered this fact: ‘None of the ICC alternatives will have a substantial impact on the level of service experienced by motorists on the Capital Beltway, I-270, or I-95.’

“And the State Highway Administration has told us that restarting yet another study, as the ‘pave the world’ special interests want, would cost millions and take another five years – and could delay our widening Norbeck Road Extended/ the 28-198 connector in four lanes all the way from Rockville to I-95. We would be delaying immediate relief for County motorists to study yet again a ‘pie-in-the-sky’ project that’ll never get built.”

Councilmember Ewing released an eight-point approach to improving mobility that included:

- \$25 million more now to add more Ride-On buses and explore express buses, including service from Rockville to BWI;
- Improve roads, including expanding Norbeck Road Extended to four lanes from Rockville to I-95 to help east-west travel, and step up intersection and interchange improvements;

(more...)

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- Promote transit-oriented development ;
- Extend light rail and heavy rail – the Inner Purple Line Metro and the Corridor Cities Transitway, the latter extended to Frederick;
- Adjust the incentives for travel to encourage transit vis-à-vis the automobile;
- Get serious about telecommuting programs;
- Engage bordering jurisdictions in joint mobility planning; and
- Increase access and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

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